

# THE SPIRITUAL ISSUES OF THE WAR

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## IN WHAT SPIRIT ARE WE TO TREAT OUR CONQUERED ENEMY?

### BISHOP OF ROCHESTER'S EXAMINATION OF THE PROBLEM

The Bishop of Rochester (Dr. C. M. Chavasse, O.B.E., M.C.) writes as follows in his *Diocesan Chronicle* for September, dealing with a subject on which there is much discussion at the present time:—

Please God, as we enter on the sixth year of War, we may encourage our hearts with the belief that we are also entering upon the first year of Peace. If so, it is essential that everyone of us should have made up our minds in what spirit we are to treat our conquered enemy. Despite the hot, implacable, and vengeful words we often hear employed with regard to our foes and their unspeakable atrocities, the English remain at heart a forgiving people—especially to a beaten antagonist. As a nation, we do not fall under Tennyson's condemnation of "the little hearts that know not how to forgive." It has, indeed, been said of us that we give away in peace what we have won in war. On the other hand, we have a duty to posterity, to make impossible in the future what we have suffered twice over in one generation. We have, also, a duty towards Germany in seeing that justice is done. Retributive justice has been called "one of the deepest ideas of the world's history," and it is based on the incontestable maxim of Spinoza: "It is not good that a guilty man should profit by his guilt." For eighty years, ever since her kingdoms were welded into an Empire, Germany has made war, and so far has been allowed to get away with it. Moreover, forgiveness can often be the easy tolerance of refusing to weigh up the crime that has been committed. If French vindictiveness, after 1918, was based on fear, there were sentimentalists in this country quite prepared to

forgive Germany for what she had done to France.

We in Kent, more particularly after the senseless murder and destruction of the last two months, have the right to speak, and to be heard, on the subject of Forgiving the Germans.

We must begin (as always) by finding out what is the mind and teaching of Christ on the duty of forgiving enemies.

First, we learn that where forgiveness is concerned there must be a burning indignation against grievous wrong or injury. Otherwise, forgiveness is not necessary. We can just forget. Nor would forgiveness be considered so hard a Christian virtue that (as in the Lord's Prayer) it is taken for granted that we can only forgive others by remembering how God has forgiven us. I am, therefore, only writing this letter for those who feel it is impossible to forgive.

Secondly, even while our enemies are still unforgiven, we have duties towards them. Revenge and reprisals are entirely ruled out of Christian ethics. Instead we are to have a concern for their welfare—both of the body and of the soul. "If thine enemy hunger, feed him" (Romans xii, 20). "Pray for those who despitefully use you" (Matt. v. 44). In doing so we are reminded that it was "while we were yet enemies" that "Christ died for for us," and "we were reconciled to God" (Rom. v. 8, 9).

Thirdly, arising out of this obligation of seeking the bodily and spiritual welfare of our enemies, we are commanded to make overtures towards them. Our Lord (Matt. xvii, 15-17) bids us to make continued appeals to our enemies, and to reason with

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them with ever increasing pressure. We have, indeed, to exhaust all the resources of persuasion and forbearance before our responsibility is ended. Here, I believe, we learn what Christ means by forgiveness. Forgiveness is not an act, like signing a pardon. Forgiveness is a disposition, like love, which should be always going forth from the one who has been wronged to the wrong-doer. *Forgiving-ness* is the first element in forgiveness; and it is that attitude of mind and heart in the one who has been wronged which first makes forgiveness possible. We may call it "The Forgiving Spirit"—that active disposition, and that feeling, which manifests itself in forgiving *actions*, even before forgiveness is sought. It is very often the chief factor in inducing repentance.

Fourthly, the matter of forgiveness now passes out of the hands of the injured to the one who has committed the injury. *Forgiving-ness* on the part of the wronged must be met by repentance on the part of the wrong-doer, if there is to be in him the sense of *forgiveness*, which is the second element in forgiveness. The wrong-doer must recognize, admit, and confess the wrong. Till he has done so, there can be *forgiving-ness* but no *forgiveness*. In the words of the gentle Saviour—if he still refuse, let him be unto thee as unclean and outcast (Matt. xvii, 18). Nowhere in the Bible—whether it be a case of God and man, or man and man—is forgiveness enjoined, promised, or possible, unless there be, in the wrong-doer, this change of heart, this repentance.

Lastly, when this change of mind and heart is exhibited, then forgiveness, full and free, ensues spontaneously and naturally. For what is forgiveness? Forgiveness is one-ness of heart and likeness of mind, between the wronged and the wrong-doer, concerning the wrong that has been committed. Thus the forgiveness of God is the Atone-ment wrought by Christ—God and man at-one-mind about sin. The forgiveness of men is for the forgiver and the forgiven to dwell as brethren together in unity. Simply to let bygones be bygones is not forgiveness. It is not to love your enemy, nor the result of praying for him. It is to condone his crime, instead of attempting to change his heart; and thereby to make oneself an accessory to the crime that has been committed.

I think we can now see our duty towards Germany a little more clearly, and can (with prayer) adopt a policy towards our defeated enemy that shall approve itself to our Ascended Saviour and Lord.

There is no need to press home the stark truth that Nazi Germany has been guilty of a monstrosity of atrocity that would be un-

believable but for the shuddering facts. For the salvation of the soul of the German nation, as well as for the safety of the world, it is imperative that the German people should come to realize the blackness and horror of the record against them. That, however, will not prevent us from the first moment of the cessation of hostilities from sending missions to save them from starvation, disease, bankruptcy and anarchy. I like to remember that it was our Prime Minister who, in 1918, spoke so strongly of the iniquity of the embargo we inflicted on Germany between the Armistice and the final signing of the Peace Treaty. I like also to recall that, after the last war, German prisoners became the ambassadors of peace and goodwill—so well had they been treated in England during their captivity.

On the other hand, the deliberate cruelty of the Gestapo, and merciless outrage by whomever inflicted, calls for condign punishment. Otherwise there can be no re-education of the mass of the German nation, and more particularly of their youth, taught to enjoy the infliction of torture and terror. The latter stages of the war will itself bring stern retribution. The chief criminals will, we may hope, be dealt with by their own people, and so save us from being their executioners—a dreadful and hurtful role from which we may pray to be delivered. The awful bombing, too, which is even now inflicting untold agony and distress on the German people, will prove a searing re-educator. For this is the first time that modern Germany has experienced in her own land the desolation of war which she has inflicted with glee on other peoples.

All this, however inevitable, is terrible; and we only dare to contemplate it, in no vindictive spirit, but as the purging pains that may bring a demented nation back to sanity. As regards the people in general it would be folly, as well as wicked, to regard the greater part of them as devils; for we cannot exterminate them, even if, in a spirit of madness, we wished to do so. The only hope is to regard and treat the great mass of them as having been misled, deceived, and very largely helpless. As such, heavy as must be their punishment as a nation, we shall only bring those individuals to judgment whose guilt has been proved. As such, too, we shall dare to hope that the better elements in Germany will be given scope and encouragement to re-educate their fellows; for their humbled pride would never accept the victorious English and Americans as their educators.

In all we do we have to work towards the re-birth of the German nation, and their co-



operation with us in the better ordering of the world. We can help towards this end even now by watching our demeanour towards our enemies and by so speaking of them in war-time that we shall not be ashamed of our words if they are quoted in the coming days of peace.

## CHAPEL IN LIVERPOOL CITY OFFICE

*The Church Times* (September 8th) writes: "Amenities such as canteens, rest and recreation rooms are common features of large blocks of office buildings. Far more rare in modern times is the provision of spiritual amenities. But Liverpool now boasts one large block of office buildings in which a chapel has been furnished and where the Eucharist is celebrated daily, and Matins and Evensong are said.

"For some years the building has been largely occupied by the Navy, and the chief credit for the chapel must go to the Rev. A. C. Smith, R.N.V.R., Chaplain to the Forces, but it is intended for the use of civilian as well as naval workers in the building.

"It is the hope of Mr. Smith, and of the Senior Naval Chaplain, the Rev. C. H. R. Cocup, R.N., that the chapel will be allowed to remain after the war, when the Navy has evacuated the building.

"Dedicated in honour of St. Nicholas, the chapel has on its altar a cross made from timbers salvaged from the bombed parish church of St. Nicholas. It is shortly to have a prayer desk and credence table made by the great naval shipbuilders, Messrs. Cammell Laird and Co.

"The Bishop of Liverpool is shortly to inaugurate a series of midday lectures in the chapel."

## PARIS UNDER THE GERMANS BRITISH CHAPLAIN'S WORK IN INTERNMENT CAMP

*The Record* (September 8th, 1944) gives the following account by the Rev. Arthur Cotter, Chaplain of Chantilly, of his experiences in France under German occupation.

First of all let me say that I took over the British Embassy Church in Paris on June 10th, 1940, to allow the Embassy Chaplain, the Rev. Eustace Wade, and party to get away to England. Four days after his departure the Germans made their triumphal entry into the French capital. St. George's and Christ Church, Neuilly, had been closed, as well as the Church of Scotland and the Methodist Church, but the Embassy Church remained open and carried on as usual, the Germans not interfering. I seemed to be in

the position of St. Paul, having the care of all the churches, at least of their members. In July, the Germans began to intern men of military age, but it was not until October 17th that I was "picked up" and interned in St. Denis. I had anticipated this eventuality and had arranged with an aged Baptist minister, the Rev. H. H. Pullen, who had been caught in Paris on his way home from Spezzia, Italy, to act as lay reader in my absence. This he did until the final round-up of British subjects, men and women, on December 5th. Since then the Church has been closed.

I will not weary you with a description of conditions in St. Denis, except to say that they were hard and trying. Internees consist of "all sorts and conditions of men" caged together, and from this promiscuity there is no escape. Being of a philosophic mind I determined to make the best of it and not allow circumstances to master me, but to turn them to use.

It soon became known in the camp that there was a Church of England padre among them, and it was not long before I was asked if I could give them a Communion Service, and stable lads and jockeys from Chantilly came up to shake hands with me. I was, however, not the only ecclesiastic in the camp. There were some Nonconformist ministers who were working either in the French Reformed Church or engaged in independent Protestant missionary activity among the French, as well as several Roman priests and seminarists, who were a great asset to the athletic and sporting activities so necessary in the men's camp. The Protestant ministers, who realized that the majority of church-going men were Anglicans elected me their chairman and we soon got Church services at the camp on a proper basis. We had two services on Sundays; the morning service was Anglican, conducted by me. It followed immediately after the R.C. Mass, while the evening service was Nonconformist. I invited the Nonconformist ministers to take their turn in preaching at the Anglican services, and in return I was present at the Nonconformist service. I celebrated the Holy Communion once a month. These services at St. Denis were very moving, partly by reason of their utter simplicity, partly because the men were in trouble and seeking comfort. I had no robes with me nor did I use them at all in that camp. The singing was not good, but it was hearty and made a joyful noise unto the Lord.

Something had to be done to improve the singing, so we started a choir practice of the Sunday's hymns, combining it with a short Bible reading and brief remarks. We as-



sembled in the corridor of the third floor of the building and used a portable harmonium borrowed from our Roman friends. In spite of interruptions the choir practice grew in numbers, so we had to seek other quarters. We finally got the use for half an hour daily of a room on the same floor used as a music practice room for the camp orchestra. This had the advantage that it had a piano. We then became more ambitious and held a joint daily evening service, on informal lines, each minister conducting it as he saw best. When I had the service I naturally conducted it on Anglican lines and drew up a short litany of intercession. It was a great success and a wonderful spirit prevailed among both clergy and laity. In spite of our differences, we discovered that we had found something, or would it not be better to say Someone?—something for which we pray, which emanates from Someone, namely, “the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.” One evening I proposed that those attending these evening gatherings organize themselves as a special camp group, suggesting the name Christian Fellowship Group. This was done. Under the auspices of the Group, a series of addresses on Church history were given, each clergyman choosing a period which suited him. These talks aroused enormous interest, as the average internee is ignorant of such matters and has or had no conception that there is a Christian viewpoint on current problems, such as economics. He began to realize that Christianity is a bigger thing than what he had imagined and to sense, if even dimly, that if Christ is the Lord of life, He is Lord of *all* life, so that everything that interests humanity must therefore interest the Church.

### NAME OF A PAMPHLET

In a recent reference to a pamphlet by the Rev. W. H. Maxwell Rennie and Mr. L. D. Gibbin on the return of the Forces we accidentally omitted its title. This is “Our Men Returning”; the publisher, Evans Bros., the price 1s. 6d.

### THE RELIGIOUS SITUATION IN ALSACE

From Switzerland the *National Zeitung* reports:

“The review *Cahiers du Temoignage Chrétien*, which is published clandestinely, devotes a lengthy and detailed article to the religious situation in Alsace-Lorraine. It states that open war is not being waged against the Church but at the same time everything possible is done in order to paralyse church life to an ever-increasing

extent. Services are restricted and new legal statutes are being introduced. Many pastors (over half of the priests of the diocese of Metz) have been banished: the theological faculties and preachers’ seminaries are closed, the Protestant and Catholic schools and organizations dissolved. It is no longer possible to use the Cathedral at Strasbourg. Finally, the Concordat between the Church and the State has been revoked, as a result of which all financial support from the State to the Church has ceased.”

### HOW THE NAZIS TREAT DANISH PASTORS

*Kirkelig Pressetjeneste*, of June 28th, 1944, tells the story of how the Nazis are treating Danish pastors.

“Pastor Take Severinsen has been sent to a concentration camp at Kiel.

“The Germans have also badly treated Pastor Juul Sørensen from Begninge. They first of all took him to the woods at Broholm, where they threatened to kill him, as they had killed Kaj Munk, if he did not tell them where his son was hiding. He refused. The Germans took him with them, stopped at Nyborg for luncheon, but made the priest wait in the car. On arriving at Odense, they imprisoned the Danish Pastor in the potato cave of the Gestapo headquarters. After further vain questioning, the pastor was released.

“The Methodist minister, Damtoft from Aalborg, has been arrested on the grounds that he was intending to flee abroad and also because of his journalistic work.”

### AMERICANS HELP TO RESTORE ANCIENT ENGLISH CHAPEL

An American Fortress Bomber Squadron stationed in England has undertaken to raise from their officers and men the sum of £600 in order that a 14th Century Chapel may be restored in a village Church together with a Window in memory of their fallen comrades. The Window consisting of two lights has Our Lord in one and an American Airman in his flying kit in the other, together with the insignias of each of the Bomber Squadrons and surmounted in a small light at the top the insignia of the Bomber Group. The prevailing colours are blue and gold—the colours of the American Air Force. The Altar hangings are blue and gold also, together with blue and gold candlesticks and Cross on an oak Altar. The Communion rails are also of oak and the carpet will depict the colours of the United States Air Force. It is hoped that this Memorial Chapel will be ready for Dedication later in the autumn.